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AUTHOR Ediger, Marlow
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ABSTRACT

One means of reporting learner achievement in reading is to utilize parent-teacher conferences. Adequate skills in word recognition is one facet of reading achievement that might be reported. Important word recognition techniques include: using phonics to unlock new words, syllabication, and utilizing context clues, configuration clues, picture clues, and structural analysis. Pupils also need to comprehend what has been read. Reading comprehension skills that might be evaluated with parents of the involved pupil include: comprehension of important facts; generalization; reading to follow directions; reading to acquire a sequence of ideas; critical reading; and understanding the purpose of the writer. In parent-teacher conferences, adequate time needs to be given to discussing pupil progress in reading for a variety of purposes to comprehend content. (RS)

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REPORTING PUPIL PROGRESS IN READING

by Marlow Ediger

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REPORTING PUPIL PROGRESS IN READING

How should learner achievement in reading be reported to parents? One means, among others, might be to utilize parent-teacher conferences.

Definite criteria need to be followed in conducting parent-teacher conferences.

1. Mutual respect toward ideas presented must be in evidence.
2. Adequate preparation must be inherent in the conference.
3. Parents need to have ample opportunities to ask questions pertaining to their child's progress.
4. The teacher can acquire much information about children to provide more adequately for individual differences in the class setting.
5. Agreed upon goals between parents and the teacher should be a relevant end result of the conference. The home and school must work together to assist each pupil to achieve optimally.

Reporting Progress in Reading

Which categories of reading progress need to be reported to parents in a conference setting? There are many facets of achievement which might be reported.

For primary grade pupils, in particular, adequate skills in word recognition techniques need developing. For example, each pupil should develop abilities to use phonics to identify new words. Thus, learner need to have interesting, purposeful, and meaningful experiences in associating sounds (phonemes) with symbols (graphemes). Pupils should be guided to avoid overgeneralizing on sound-symbol relationships. There are many words which are

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spelled phonetically, e.g. ban, can, Dan, fan, man, Nan, pan, ran, and tan. There are also numerous words which lack consistency between graphemes and phonemes, e.g. through, cough, rough, and bough. Teachers need to have adequate data pertaining to pupil progress in using phonics to unlock new words. The resulting information might then be shared with parents.

A second word recognition technique to emphasize in the reading curriculum is syllabication. A pupil may be able to identify an unknown word after dividing it into appropriate syllables. For example, a learner may feel that "unlikely" is a new word. Detaching the syllable "un" as well as the syllable "by," the pupil might then recognize a familiar syllable "like." No doubt, the pupil has noticed the syllable "un" and the syllable "ly" in other words, e.g. unimportant--largely. Thus, the word "unlikely" is not new but a rearrangement of previously known syllables. The teacher may wish to discuss, with parents, pupil progress in utilizing syllabication as a technique to unlock new words.

A third valuable word recognition method to emphasize in the teaching of reading is to utilize context clues. When using content clues, the involved pupil chooses words which are meaningful and make sense in the sentence. For example, a learner cannot identify a word within a sentence, but tries a word or words which harmonize with the rest of the words in the sentence. Certainly, pupil progress in learning to use context clues can be reported to parents.

Other word recognition techniques which need to be developed by learners include using configuration clues (noting the shape and form of words), picture clues (using pictures on a page to identify unknown

words), and structural analysis (dividing words into component parts for recognition--prefix, root word, and suffix).

Merely identifying words correctly is not adequate in the reading curriculum. Pupils also need to comprehend and understand what has been read. Relevant information on achieved pupil comprehension skills can be discussed with parents in a conference setting. Which reading comprehension skills might be evaluated with parents of the involved pupil?

Certainly, it is relevant to comprehend important facts. Higher levels of cognition or thinking is based on factual knowledge. An adequate number of objectives in the reading curriculum needs to stress acquiring vital facts. A rather meticulous purpose is then involved in understanding specifics and details, rather than broader ideas.

Factual content acquired by pupils can be related and developed into generalizations. Each generalization attained by learners can be checked for accuracy. Thus, factual ideas need to support any generalization. A statement becomes a generalization if many specific items of information support the warranted conclusion.

Reading to follow directions carefully is important. Numerous learners like to assemble model airplanes and cars which require accurate following of directions. Working an exercise in a workbook or worksheet also requires, in many cases, careful reading of directions to complete the ensuing exercises correctly. In society, recipes need to be followed carefully so that a quality finished food product is ensured.

Pupils also need to learn to read to acquire a sequence of ideas. Frequently, individuals need to remember what happened first, second, third, and fourth in terms of ordered content. Practice needs to be provided so that pupils may attain sequential ideas in reading.

Reading critically involves higher levels of cognition. In critical reading, a learner separates what is factual from what is opinion. Being able to separate accurate from inaccurate statements also involves critical reading. Better decisions can be made by an individual if the ability to analyze subject matter into component parts is inherent. Too frequently, a reader accepts as factual all or nearly all content being read. Writers write opinions as well as factual content. Content may be dull and boring if only facts are written. A writer writing that a certain country or nation is picturesque is expressing an opinion. It is not verifiable if the nation is picturesque. A writer, intentionally or unintentionally, may write inaccurate ideas along with the accurate. The reader needs to develop skill to critically appraise content.

Purposes of writers differ in providing content to readers. The following purposes, among others, may be involved: to inform, to persuade, to propagandize, to present opinions, and to clarify ideas. Learners need to be aware of purposes or reasons involved on the part of writers in providing written content for others.

In a parent-teacher conference, adequate time needs to be given to discussing pupil progress in reading for a variety of purposes to comprehend content.

In Summary

Parents need to be informed adequately pertaining to their child's progress in school. Reading is the first of three r's in the curriculum--reading, writing, and arithmetic. Thus, the teacher needs to communicate to parents pupil progress in reading. Cooperatively, the teacher and parents need to develop a curriculum which assists each pupil to achieve optimally in reading.